

# **News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending April 10, 2010**

## **Kingdom – Latin-American Political Instability a Concern**

The Dutch Defense Ministry released its “Strategische Verkenningen” rapport (Strategic Reconnaissance Report) for the Kingdom, last week.

International drug syndicates are considered a threat in the Caribbean region and could impact the maintenance of law and order in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

Continued instability in the Latin-American region might lead to tensions and conflicts in the coming decennia.

The sovereignty of Curacao and Aruba possibly will be at stake and is deemed a reason for concern, but the Dutch have no indications that its security is currently threatened.

President Chavez’ assertive political policy in Venezuela is focused on expanding his regional influence by seeking support from Cuba, Iran, and Russia. Also, Venezuela has ties with criminal and terrorist organizations, such as the Colombian FARC.

Venezuela could slip off to a dictatorship, if Chavez manages to change the constitution to prolong his presidency.

The Dutch government is contemplating on strengthening its military presence on Curacao and Aruba if tensions should arise. (Amigoe)

## **Statia – Gerald Berkel New Island Governor**

Gerald Berkel was sworn in as St. Eustatius’ Island Governor on April 1, by Netherlands Antilles Governor Frits Goedgedrag. He replaced Hyden Gittens, who ended his term in December 2009. (Daily Herald)

## **Aruba – Valero Refinery Tax Deal With Government Still Unsettled**

The tax dispute between US-owned Valero refinery and the Aruba government, worth US \$112 million, is still unsettled. The Aruba government and Valero reportedly settled the disagreement a couple of months ago, but the Aruba tax office wants to collect more than was agreed upon between the two parties. “We shall do our utmost to protect ourselves against the wrongful actions of the Aruban tax department,” says Kimberly Bowers, vice-president of Valero. Aruba PM Mike Eman stated that the tax office actions do not serve the public interest, and asked Finance Minister Mike de Meza to take appropriate action.

Valero has placed more than US \$200 million of cash in an escrow account while the dispute was in arbitration. After the government approved the settlement, Valero agreed to pay about US \$112 million in taxes and a minimum tax payment of US \$10 million a year as long as the company owns the refinery. (Amigoe)

## **Kingdom – Dutch Parliament to Discuss Dismantling Legislation**

Netherlands Antilles PM Emily de Jongh-Elhage will travel to the Netherlands from April 10-16, to attend Dutch parliamentary discussions regarding constitutional changes,

proposed amendments, and the Kingdom laws approval process. Netherlands Antilles and Aruban parliamentary delegations are also in the Netherlands for the same reason. Dutch parliamentarians will reportedly propose law enforcement structure changes; shifting priorities and powers to the Dutch led Detective Cooperation Team RST. Also, Dutch MPs propose strengthening the financial oversight agreement between de Kingdom partners. The parties agreed that if Curacao and/or St. Maarten meet at least the minimum budgetary requirements in three of the next five years, financial supervision will be lifted, but Dutch parliamentarians prefer to terminate the financial oversight via a consensus Kingdom law. (Various media)

## **CURAÇAO**

### ***Crime April 2 – 8***

On April 4 a snackbar in Juan Hato was robbed by two men. The following evening, three men sitting outside a home in Otrobanda were shot and injured by occupants of a passing vehicle. The motive for the shooting is not known (Amigoe, Extra, La Prensa).

## **ARUBA**

### ***Crime April 2 – 8***

On April 3 a man was shot and injured near South Beach Center. The motive is not known. On April 4, a home owner in Tanki Leendert was robbed by three men (Diario Aruba, Awe Mainta).

## **ST. MAARTEN**

### ***Crime April 2 – 8***

On April 6 a man was robbed in Sucker Garden by two occupants of a vehicle who pretended to be a taxi driver and passenger (Daily Herald).

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*"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."*